# *Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin*

**Spring 1999**

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**Late Spring on Arboretum Drive East**

"A hummingbird magnet." "Beautiful tree." "Spring highlight."

Visitors to the Washington Park Arboretum laud the Chilean fire bush for these features and others. The sight of masses of striking red tubular flowers in late May causes slowdowns along Arboretum Drive East, near the New Zealand Garden. Native to Argentina and Chile, the tree reaches to 30 feet and needs a special location in the landscape that complements its spectacular presence. Photo by Joy Spurr

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The Arboretum Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was chartered to further Washington Park Arboretum development, projects, and programs through volunteer service and fund raising. Its mission is to ensure stewardship for the Washington Park Arboretum, a Pacific Northwest treasure, and to provide horticultural leadership for the region. This stewardship requires effective leadership, stable funding, and broad public support.

Washington Park Arboretum (WPA) is administered cooperatively between the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH), the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Arboretum Foundation. The programs and plant collections are a responsibility of CUH.

WPA is a living plant museum emphasizing trees and shrubs hardy in the maritime Pacific Northwest. Plant collections are selected and arranged to display their beauty and function in urban landscapes, to demonstrate their natural ecology and diversity, and to conserve important species and cultivated varieties for the future. The arboretum serves the public, students at all levels, naturalists, gardeners, and nursery and landscape professionals with its collections, educational programs, interpretation, and recreational opportunities.

Where you see this symbol inside the magazine, discover more about Washington Park Arboretum (WPA).

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Bid on this rare epimedium, and support the Arboretum Foundation, Page 21

# In the Washington Park Arboretum

## *Spring into Summer*

### A Time of Rejuvenation

Spring is a time of rebirth and growth—nowhere more than in the Arboretum.

Over-mature shrub beds are being rejuvenation pruned, which always happens at this time of year. The most dramatic effect will be visible in the large bed of Japanese flowering quince along Lake Washington Boulevard East, on Department of Transportation grounds. The entire large mass was cut to the ground in January. This helps the staff to better manage the morning glory and black nightshade competing for space in the arboretum.

At last, we can see the original planting locations of the overgrown bed of pyracantha along Arboretum Drive East just south of Graham Visitors Center. Vigorous new growth is now returning. Many of the older azaleas along Azalea Way have received less drastic rejuvenation pruning. Recently, the largest and oldest stems were removed on plants that have begun to decline in vigor and flowering. This encourages new growth and flowering.

### Renewing the Cedars

Arboretum Horticulturist Christina Pfeiffer reports that work continues on trying to protect the stand of Port Orford cedars, just south of the Graham Visitors Center. In hopes of discouraging *Phytophthora* root disease, the staff has applied soil-injected mycorrhizal fungi, beneficial bacteria, and a slow-release fertilizer.

Mycorrhizae are beneficial fungi that infect tree roots and enhance nutrient and water uptake. Researchers have noted decreased infection by disease fungi where mycorrhizae are plentiful, presumably because of the improved tree vigor. This new approach to root disease management holds promise for difficult-to-manage root diseases. We will monitor this stand carefully over the next few years.

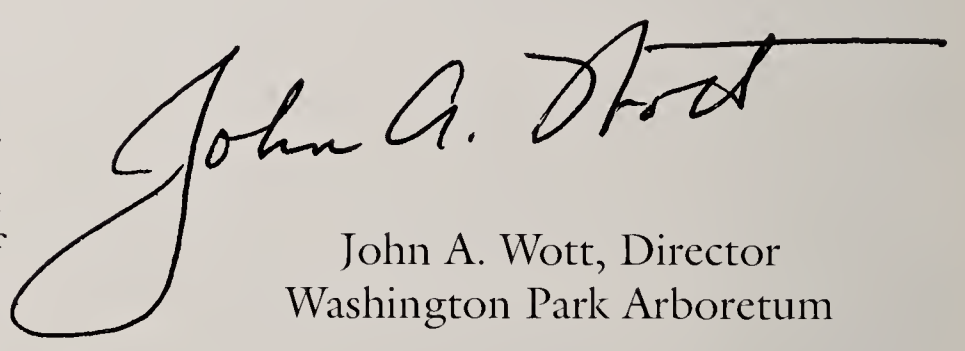
### Fresh Student Faces

Over 1500 students from Seattle and surrounding areas are participating in the Saplings school program this spring. There is a buzz in the air about the specific program "Spring Sprouts," which traces a plant's life cycle from flowers to fruits. It is coordinated with the third grade science curriculum. Tiare Sheller, the new halftime education assistant, is concentrating on expanding Branching Out, a free on-site after-school program.

This spring, we are working with four area community centers reaching over 60 inner-city youth. Students ranging from ages 5 to 12 are learning about botany, ethnobotany, and urban ecology to gain a better understanding of the importance of plants to human and animal life.

Storyteller Rose Fitzpatrick explores the mysteries and magic of plants and animals on Saturday mornings. Arboretum Adventure is a monthly program for children ages 6 to 12 to explore the natural world through interactive tours and hands-on art and science activities. This summer, the arboretum is also looking forward to offering a week-long summer nature camp. The arboretum is committed to providing quality experiences for children and their families.

Spring through summer continues growth of many other arboretum programs as well as plants. We hope that you will visit soon.



John A. Wott, Director
Washington Park Arboretum

RIGHT:
*Prunus serrulata* 'Shogetsu'
in May. Photo by Joy Spurr

# Renewing Our Commitment to Washington Park

## *Message from the Arboretum Foundation's Executive Director*

The start of spring 1999 is welcomed in the Washington Park Arboretum, as we look forward to a Seattle summer. The warmer seasons give us a sense of renewal, an infusion of new energy. We see it in the faces of arboretum visitors, many of whom drop into the Graham Visitors Center to look around and browse through the gift shop. Spring is reflected in the smiles of children here on outings and in the obvious pleasure of people who view the magnificent cherry trees in full bloom.

Nowhere is the season of spring more evident than in people who are looking for plants. If you missed the Foundation's 50th annual FLORAbundance sale, you can still visit us on site to find something perfect from the Pat Calvert Greenhouse and the adjacent Plant Donations Department. How fitting that the Arboretum Foundation brings the best, the most unusual, and the most popular plants to the greater Seattle gardening community—beautifying gardens all over the region, while raising funds to support the arboretum.

We also direct our seasonal energies into the Arboretum Plan, the draft document that outlines plans for the future. It is newly updated and revised to reflect input offered by the community. The plan now enters the preparation phase for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is expected to take 6 to 8 months and will study various options in the revision. This information will help the plan's authors make informed decisions when choosing the options that will remain in the final document.

Modern technology has expanded the community's ability to participate in the process through the posting of the revised plan on the Web: www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/arboretum/cover.htm

Further public meetings will be held after the EIS is completed.

I can't remember a more interesting or active time for the Arboretum Foundation. And with the advent of Spring, I can't imagine anything more worthwhile or fulfilling than directing our renewed energies into our stewardship role of this urban treasure.

Deborah Andrews, Executive Director
The Arboretum Foundation

# A Tale of Two Species

## *Conservation at Washington Park Arboretum*

BY RANDALL C. HITCHIN

PHOTOS BY JAN SILVER

Botanic gardens and arboreta play many important roles in the horticultural world. Among them is the conservation of endangered species.

Although there are many different approaches to conserving plants, species conservation consists of two complementary types of strategies.

The first category of strategies is called in situ or on-site conservation, which involves activities conducted within the habitat of a species. However, most conservation efforts undertaken by public gardens fall into the category of ex situ (off-site) conservation.

The ex situ conservation strategies conducted in public gardens versus a plant's natural habitat take a variety of forms. After acquiring a specimen or specimens, gardens can offer interpretive programs that educate a wide audience about endangered species and the importance of plant conservation. Many gardens have developed sophisticated seed banking facilities or maintain well-documented wild collections representing significant amounts of the genetic variability within a species.

The plant collections of the Washington Park Arboretum contain many species listed as threatened or endangered. Among these are two conifers that originate on opposite sides of the globe yet have similar and interesting stories.

### Serbian Spruce

*Picea omorika* is the native Serbian spruce, which has the most southerly distribution of any native European spruce. Although the fossil record indicates that *P. omorika* was widely distributed in Europe prior to the last ice age, its present distribution is restricted to a few scattered stands in the limestone mountains of Serbia, along the upper reaches of the Drina River. Botanists

use the term *relic species* to describe taxa, such as *P. omorika,* that have experienced severe range restrictions in the geologic past.

Serbian spruce has a slender trunk with short, pendulous branches that sweep upward at the ends. Juvenile specimens assume a narrowly conical form, while the habit of mature trees may be nearly columnar. The species is relatively slow growing; in gardens it can reach as much as 25 feet in as many years. In the wild, specimens are reported to reach 100 feet in height.

In cultivation, *Picea omorika* performs best in partial shade to full sun and can adapt to a wide range of soil pH and moisture. The species is very tolerant of wind, has few pests or diseases, and is hardy to USDA zone 4.

*Picea omorika* 'Nana', a dwarf cultivar, has a densely globose or pyramidal habit reaching up to 5 feet. Also available in nurseries is *P. omorika* 'Pendula', consisting of several clones that exhibit a more weeping form than the typical species. Several good specimens of *P. omorika* can be seen in the arboretum, just north of the *Sorbus* Collection, in grids 26-5E and 27-5E.

The species and its cultivars are commercially available. One source that lists them is: Forestfarm Nursery, 990 Thetherow Rd., Williams, OR 97544-9599; (541) 846-7269; www.forestfarm.com

## Bristlecone Fir

*Abies bracteata* has a story similar to that of *Picea omorika*. Commonly known as the bristlecone or Santa Lucia fir, *A. bracteata* is generally considered the rarest true fir native to North America. It is confined to a few scattered stands in the Santa Lucia mountains of Monterey and northern San Luis Obispo Counties, California.

Like Serbian spruce, the bristlecone fir is a relic species that was more widely distributed in the geologic past. As the climate of California

OPPOSITE PAGE:
*Picea omorika*, in mid-background (top).
*Abies bracteata*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has become more arid over the past several million years, this fir has been restricted to steep, rocky, fire-resistant canyons and north-facing slopes of the Santa Lucias. Within this specialized habitat, the fire-sensitive bristlecone fir is able to persist in a region that is frequently impacted by wild fires.

*Abies bracteata* forms a beautiful conical spire that may reach 70 feet at maturity. Its growth rate is fairly slow, and gardeners may expect 5 to 7 feet of growth in the first 10 years. The branches are pendant and heavily clad in dark, lustrous needles that are shade tolerant, remaining on the branches to the ground. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of this species is its cones. They have bracts that project well beyond the cone scales, giving the cone a brush-like appearance and inspiring the common name.

Although the bristlecone fir is rare, it transplants easily from containers and adapts well to gardens. This species performs well in the Puget Sound region when planted in well-drained, slightly acidic soils with full sun or light shade.

Despite its California origins, *Abies bracteata* is reasonably hardy and can be cultivated in USDA zone 8. In the arboretum, 3 handsome specimens can be seen on the slope west of the Holly Collection, in grids 6-B and 6-1E. A search of nursery lists suggests that it is not widely available and that no cultivars have been selected. One nursery source is: Las Pilitas Nursery, Las Pilitas Rd., Santa Margarita, CA 93453; (805) 438-5992; www.laspilitas.com

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Randall C. Hitchin is Registrar/Collections Manager for the Washington Park Arboretum. Reach him at (206) 616-1118 (office); e-mail: rch@u.washington.edu

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## When in the Arboretum?

*Buying Plants from the Arboretum Foundation*

People frequently ask the Arboretum Foundation whether we sell plants at times other than regularly scheduled annual plant sales. We're happy to say that we do.

### Plant Purchases at the Arboretum

**Tuesday:** 10–12, Pat Calvert Greenhouse, south of the Graham Visitors Center parking lot. The greenhouse propagates an assortment of woody plants grown from seeds or cuttings, mostly taken from collection trees and shrubs growing in the arboretum. The greenhouse is open on the first Saturday of each month, through September.

**Wednesday:** 10–2, Plant Donations Department, west of Pat Calvert Greenhouse, sells a variety of plants, many from Foundation members' gardens. Selections include woody plants, ground covers, perennials, natives, herbs, and more. The donations department is open on the first Saturday of each month, through September.

**Daily:** Find a selection of choice plants at the parking lot entrance to Graham Visitors Center and Gift Shop.

For more information about Arboretum Foundation plant sales, call (206) 325-4510.

# What in the Arboretum?

## *Wisteria in the Courtyard & on the Grounds*

Condensed from a forthcoming arboretum brochure

BY JENNY MEARS

Wisteria—the beauty of this hardy vine has been chronicled across many cultures for centuries. Its long, profuse racemes, or clusters, of flowers have inspired countless works of art, from ancient Japanese paintings to modern poems and songs. The plant itself can be a beautiful accent in any landscape, whether draped around the porch of a stately residence or showcased in a public garden.

In the 1800s, Japanese people of all classes would gather together when the wisteria was blooming to drink sake, dance, and sing. They would write poems on strips of paper and attach them to the most beautiful racemes. One story even claims that if a cup of sake is placed under the plant, its racemes or flowers will grow longer from their desire to reach the cup. Thus, it is a custom today to empty the remainder of your sake cup onto the roots of a wisteria.

The genus *Wisteria* belongs to the pea family and was named in 1818 for Caspar Wistar, a professor of anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania. The flowers can be pink, purple, white, or lilac-blue, and some have a fragrance that varies from sweet to musky.

Though botanical sources vary, there are six generally accepted species, 2 native to the eastern United States and the rest to China and Japan. Five of the 6 species have available cultivars in the *Wisteria* Collection, near the Graham Visitors Center, which was funded by Mrs. Bessie Okada in memory of her mother, Mrs. Yayoi Inouye. They include *W. floribunda, W. macrostachys, W. frutescens, W. sinensis,* and *W. venusta*. In addition to the Graham Visitors Center collection, find wisteria on an arboretum map in the Japanese Garden, in 42-3E ( *W. floribunda,* white), and in 12-5E ( *W. sinensis,* violet-blue).

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Jenny Mears studies Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington.

# The Second Best Time to Plant a Tree

PHOTOS & TEXT BY RICHARD HARTLAGE

"The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is today."

Though I cannot attribute this quote, it rings true when I walk around the Elisabeth C. Miller Garden, in North Seattle. As executive director, I cherish Betty Miller's vision and admire her choices of trees now coming into their full glory some 30 years after she planted them.

If you did not plant special trees 30 years ago, today is the right time to start.

Trees are the backbone of any garden. As a garden matures, trees take center stage. They can be sculptural, architectural, or both, depending on how they are used. Most important, however, is having trees that are in the prime of their adulthood because that is when they are in all their dreamed-of glory.

I have never been a fan of conifers, believing them static and boring, but after three years as caretaker of this garden, I not only appreciate them but cherish their contributions to the landscape. I also use them more when I design gardens for others.

My favorite tree in the Miller Garden is Spanish fir, *Abies pinsapo,* which is a medium- to large-growing species. Ours is about 30 feet tall and grows from the base of a wall on the west side of the house. Some specimens in Britain reach in excess of 90 feet, so ours will be out of scale when it reaches that height.

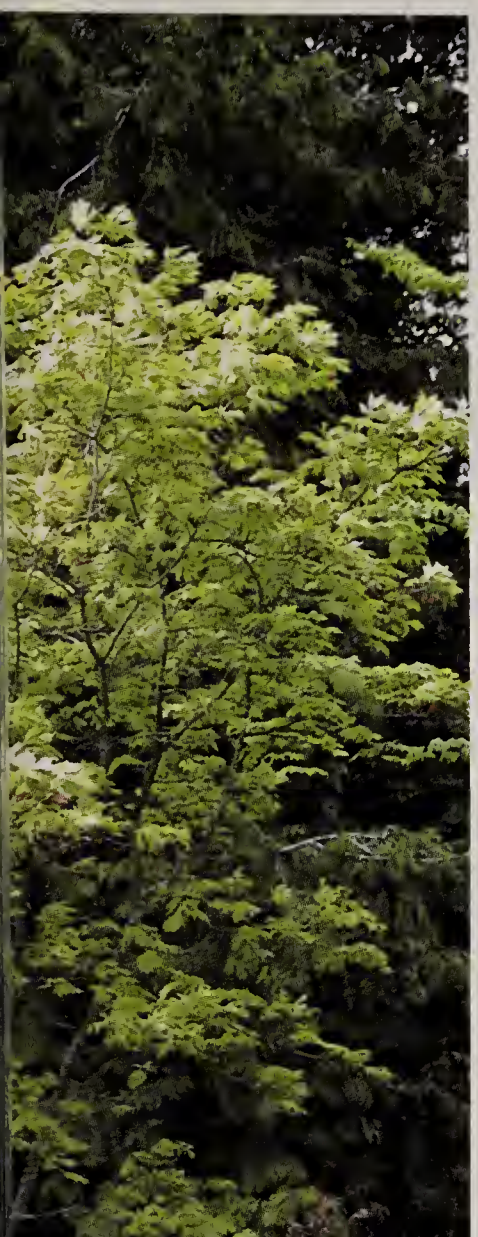
The needles of Spanish fir are blunt and very stiff, arranged evenly around the stem in a bottlebrush-like way. In late April, it is covered in a haze of red that is stunning against the blue-green needles. The red is the male cones that produce pollen to fertilize the female cones on

*(continued on page 10)*

ABOVE: *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium' in back of *Pinus sylvestris*

UPPER RIGHT: *Acer palmatum* 'Katsura'

LOWER RIGHT: *Abies pinsapo*



the tree's top. It does not have the between-the-eyes punch of a crimson canna but a more subtle beauty that requires you to slow down and appreciate the total effect and then make a closer inspection of the branches. The show lasts for about five days before the cones shrivel and fall away. Last year I planted the 'Glauca' form of Spanish fir on another side of the property. It is markedly more blue, and I will have to be patient to see it match the stature of the older plant.

Next to the Spanish fir is planted the shocking golden *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Sekken'. It reaches 18 feet, which is a lot of yellow in the sky. I have tried to add more golden variegated plants to the lower part of the garden. This makes the tree a little more at home in its setting, because it is so captivating that it needs some company to tone it down.

In the same vein and even rarer than 'Sekken', is *Cedrus brevifolia*. The Cyprian cedar is very slow growing with unusually short, bright green needles. Our tree, which is planted prominently near the front door, is sparsely branched, rising to 20 feet, and provides a light shade for the shrubs below it. Cyprian cedar is more of an oddity than a striking landscape plant.

One of Betty Miller's favorite trees was *Acer japonicum* 'Aconitifolium', which is not a true cultivar but a botanical variety that I saw populations of two years ago in Korea. The habit is dome shaped with a coarse, loose branch structure that allows easy underplanting. The leaves are deeply lobed and curiously hand shaped like the herbaceous monk's hood, *Aconitum*, which the cultivar name describes.

Betty Miller planted several 'Aconitifolium' in the garden, two of which stand out. One specimen is adjacent to the lower parking lot and underplanted with a prostrate blue spruce that has become the garden's logo. The other is on the north end of the lawn, west of the house—a perfect counterbalance to the Spanish fir on the other end of the lawn. The leaves are a fresh green in April, but it is a joy come late August because it is always one of the first trees to show autumn color. The fall leaf color lasts for nearly 2 months—starting burnished bronze and finishing stoplight yellow

The Miller Garden has many other choice maples. *Acer palmatum* 'Aoyoge' is the yellow-stemmed counterpart of the red-stemmed 'Sango-Kaku', though considerably slower in growth and smaller in stature, to 12 feet. The late October foliage of the two trees in the upper woodland are the clearest yellow of anything else planted in the area. They are bright, giving the impression of light in the dark understory, and are startling to encounter when they are at their best.

No plant has brighter crimson autumnal hues than *Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki'. 'Osakazuki' is truly fire-engineered. It typically grows to 10 feet with a broad, rounded head and large, rounded leaves. Though not distinctive in other seasons, in autumn leaf, no other plant surpasses it.

An *Acer palmatum* that I added above the drive last year has striking foliage color in spring. 'Katsura' leafs out an old gold, margined in burnished orange, which looks fantastic if underplanted with dark green foliage of low rhododendrons and backed by conifers. It turns yellow and orange again in the fall but not so uniquely colored as with the spring foliage.

Also with bizarre spring foliage is *Rhus trichocarpa*. How about a sumac that leafs out chartreuse with an overlay of neon salmon? It is very beautiful, and as the growth hardens off it turns a medium green for the summer and then to crimson like its cousin in fall. It is easy to grow and has the same stature as the common sumac.

On a larger scale is the Japanese hornbeam, *Carpinus japonica*. Our tree is 50 feet tall and broadly dome shaped. In July, it is covered with chains of green seeds that resemble large hops, and it makes a giant golden umbrella in October. Planted at its feet is a weeping scholar's tree, *Sophora japonica* 'Pendula'. Betty Miller brought this extreme weeping form from Hillier's in England some 30 years ago as a high-grafted plant. Purchase a low-grafted plant or one grown from seed, as the weeping characteristic is genetic and will be passed along to 80% of the seedlings. Then you will get a tree with an interestingly twisted trunk instead of something that looks like a mop on an arrow-straight broomstick.

These are a few of the more interesting trees in the garden of 1200 woody plant accessions. Trees will sustain you in old age, so plant now.

---

Richard Hartlage is executive director of the Elisabeth C. Miller Garden in North Seattle. Reach him by e-mail: Millergarden@compuserve.com

## Where in the Arboretum?

*Trees also found in the Miller Garden*

Many of the trees mentioned in the adjacent article about the Miller Garden can be found in the arboretum. In addition to those mentioned, we have many other species and cultivars in the genera discussed by Richard Hartlage.

Obtain a map and some help in pinpointing the following locator numbers at the receptionist's desk of the Graham Visitors Center (GVC).

*Acer palmatum* 'Aoyoge': Though we do not have 'Aoyoge', we do have one of the largest Japanese maple collections in the country. Pick up a maple brochure at the GVC.

*Abies pinsapo* (Spanish fir): 6-1E, 18-2E, 19-1E, 20-1E. 'Glauca': 17-4E, 20-B.

*Carpinus japonica* (Japanese hornbeam): 45-6E, 46-7E, 50-2E, Japanese Garden.

*Cryptomeria japonica* (Japanese redwood): We do not have 'Sekken', but find many other cultivars and the species: 37-1W, 41-6W, Japanese Garden.

*Cedrus brevifolia* (cyprus cedar): 19-4E, 41-6W, 44-6W.

*Rhus trichocarpa* (Japanese sumac): 4-1E, 33-4E.

*Sophora japonica* 'Pendula' (Japanese pagoda tree): 18-5E, near the non-weeping species.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# Butterfly Plants

The Center for Urban Horticulture helps the Pacific Science Center grow tropical plants to enhance its butterfly exhibit.

BY THOMAS SMARR, JR.

Last fall, the Douglas Conservatory at the Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) became an instant forest of tropical trees. Fred Hoyt, Manager of CUH's Douglas Research Conservatory and Plant Technician at CUH, was a consultant. Hoyt served on the design committee, which symbolizes the community service mission that the University of Washington supports.

Kay Wilson, Finance and Planning Coordinator for the exhibit, explained that Hoyt's expertise was critical in the selection of the many greenhouse operating systems that make the project a success. He worked closely with the staff at the Pacific Science Center and other involved professionals such as the architect, landscape architect, and contractors. Sarah Moore, Animal Care Manager at Pacific Science Center, remembered that "The meetings seemed to go from discussing butterflies one minute to concrete the next."

Thus, CUH participated in creating one of only two permanent live butterfly exhibits open year-round in the United States.

The survival of the tropical butterflies and flora in Seattle requires the creation of special conditions. Heating and cooling systems must be designed to maintain the necessary 80°F. Light and humidity need to stay at levels that create an environment for the survival of the butterflies and optimal growing conditions for the tropical plants. Also important is a tight containment in the greenhouse to prevent biological escapes. The Science Center installed a ceiling net to prevent butterflies from sticking to the condensation upon the glass ceiling panes.

A big part of the display is the plant material. Sarah Moore explained that the plant selection was considered from a variety of criteria, stressing the importance of nectar production, color diversity, and shallow tubular flowers for accessibility. The exhibit differs from your own garden because it eliminates host plants for egg laying, which must be done in a separate area, according to United States Department of Agriculture regulations.

Some of the plants used in the display may be familiar to tropical garden lovers. These plants can be used during a Northwest summer in containers or as seasonal annual bedding plants, though Sarah Moore suggests using native plants in the garden to attract regional butterflies. Key plant placement is in full sun and in mass plantings. Select a variety of species to ensure a longer flowering succession and plants for egg-laying. These elements will attract and continuously keep butterflies in the garden.

The Center for Urban Horticulture plans to continue developing relationships with many regional organizations. It is a great benefit for both parties when staff members, such as Fred Hoyt, are invited to be part of advisory committees. Hoyt continues to enjoy a great working relationship with all of those involved with this project and encourages everyone to go visit the Pacific Science Center's Tropical Butterfly House.

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Thomas Smarr, Jr., is a graduate student in the Urban Horticulture program at the University of Washington; e-mail: tsmarr@u.washington.edu

## Butterfly Garden Web Site

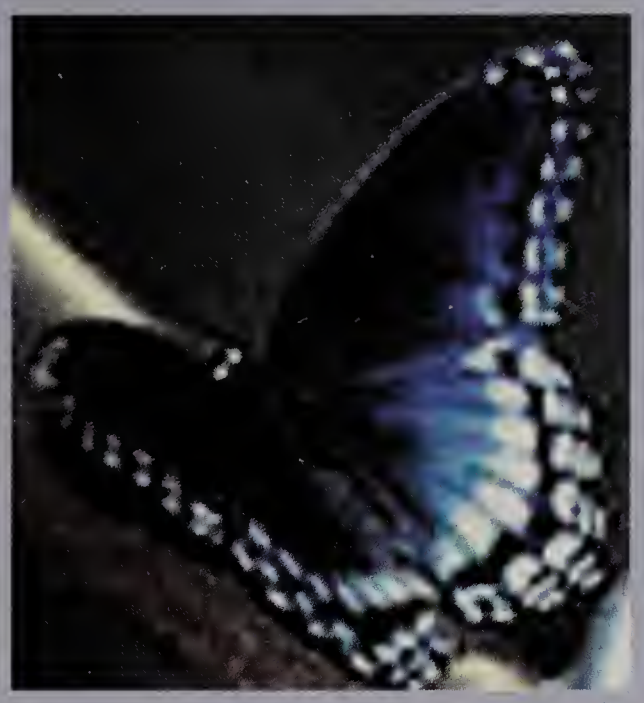
Everything you need to know about preparing an outdoor butterfly garden is on the Web. The site has articles on plants that attract butterflies and more:

http://butterflywebsite.com/Articles/constructlist.cfm?type=butterflygarden

## Pacific Science Center

*The Tropical Butterfly House and Insect Village*

Information: 206-443-2880
Admission free with general admission
Monday to Friday, 10–5
Saturday and Sunday, 10–6
www.pacsci.org/public/exhibits_feature/insects/default.htm



## Woodland Park Zoo

*Butterflies & Blooms*

Information: 206-684-4800
Admission is $1.00
plus general admission, daily.
See 15 native species among the zoo's 7200 plants and shrubs.

## Seattle Audubon Society

*Butterflies of the Puget Sound Region*

Information: 206-523-4483
Three sessions for people who want to identify butterflies and attract them to their gardens. Instructor: Idie Ulsh, Past President Seattle Audubon Society
May 18 & 25, June 1: 7–9 at the Center for Urban Horticulture.
Field session: May 22.


# Discover the Graham Visitors Center

Discover the unique gift shop for books, plants, souvenirs and a garden of other delightful gifts. All purchases support the work of the Arboretum Foundation.
Discover information - "what to see," "where to go" in the Arboretum and what to plant in your yard.

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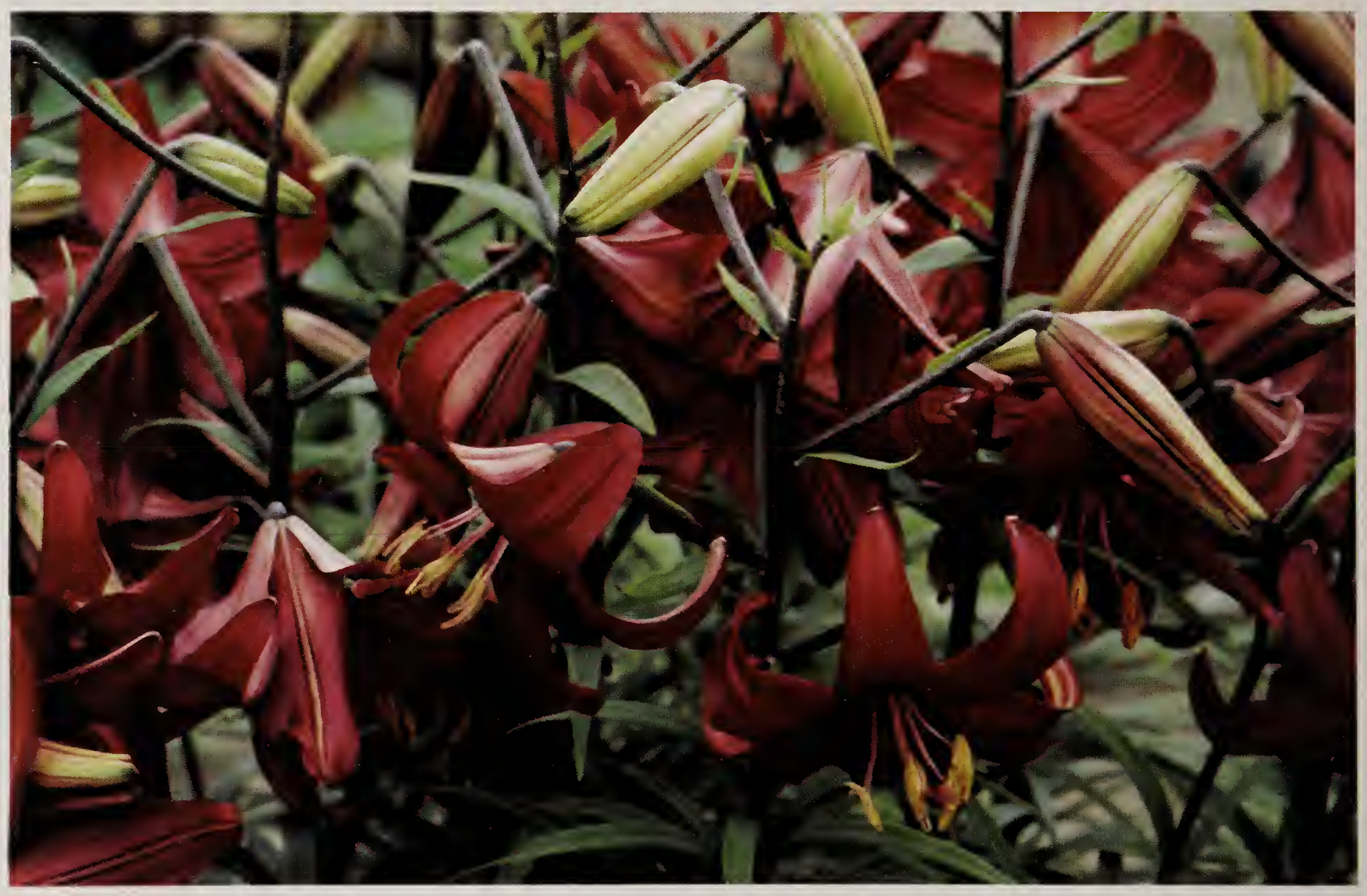
Donald G. Graham Visitors Center
2300 Arboretum Drive

Weekdays 10am to 4pm
Weekends Noon to 4pm

# Hummingbirds in the Garden

BY LYNN SCHUELER
PHOTOS BY JOY SPURR



ABOVE: *Lilium* 'Red Velvet', an Asiatic hybrid.
UPPER LEFT: *Mahonia* 'Arthur Menzies' attracts hummingbirds in late winter.
UPPER RIGHT: Red-hot poker *(Kniphofia uvaria)* is one of the most popular May plants for hummingbirds.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Hummingbirds, such as this rufous, need perching sites in or near the garden.

Have you ever wanted to attract hummingbirds to your garden? "A Hummingbird Garden," located along Arboretum Drive East in front of the Graham Visitors Center, showcases plants and ideas to draw hummers in. It is the 1998–1999 Signature Bed, a home-scale sized garden designed annually by volunteers for the Arboretum Foundation.

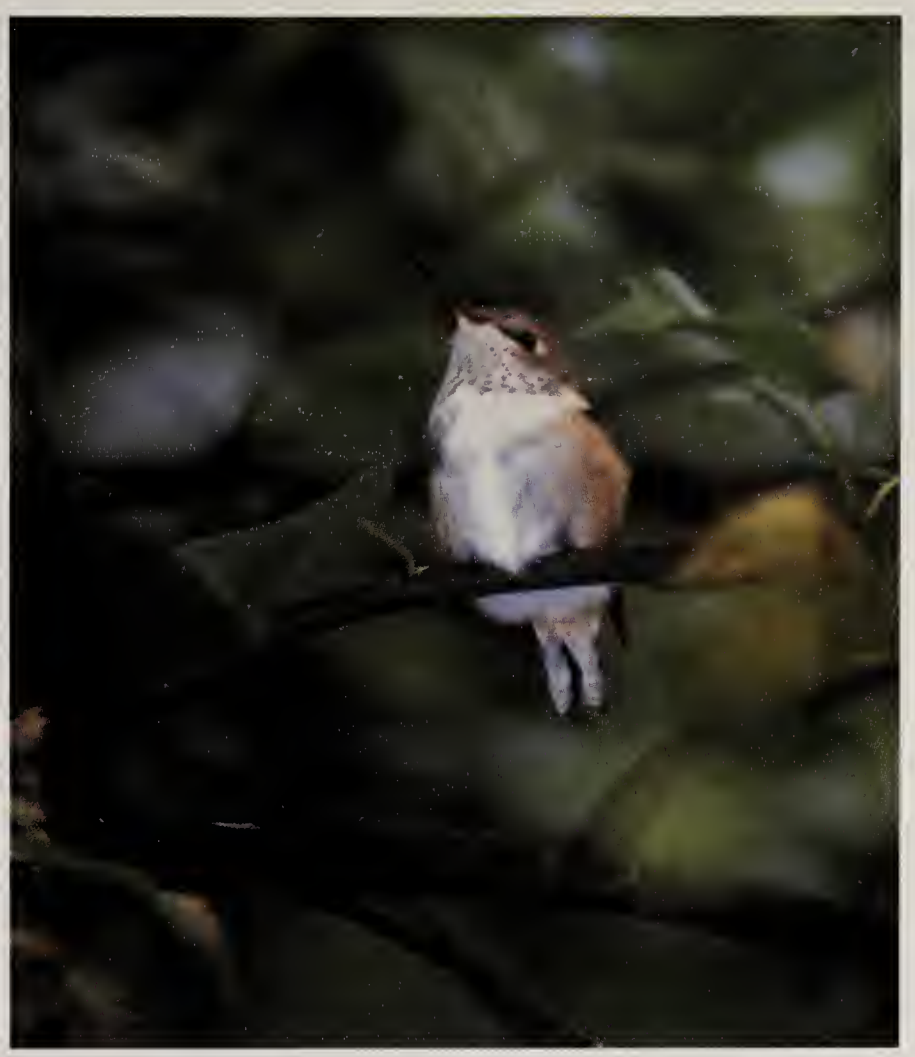
The most important characteristic of a good hummingbird plant is that its flowers hold nectar, which is the main food of the tiny birds. Other flower qualities of plants that have evolved to attract hummers as pollinators include a long, tubular shape to fit the hummingbird's bill and colors in the red spectrum that are easily seen by the birds. In fact, the color red can be seen from over a half-mile away, so try to include a lot of red in your garden, followed (in order of hummingbird preference) by pink, orange, purple, blue, and yellow. Still, hummers feed on any blossom that is rich in nectar, even the tiny, creamy white flowers of the madrona *(Arbutus menziesii)*. Fragrance is not a factor : Hummingbirds have little sense of smell.

In addition to nectar-rich flowers, hummingbirds want large trees and shrubs to provide nesting and perching sites. In the Signature Bed, we used Hinoki cypress *(Chamaecyparis obtusa)* and a madrona snag to represent those elements. A hummer that frequently feeds at the bed often perches at the top of a large pine on the southeast corner of the visitors center or in the katsura *(Cercidiphyllum japonicum)* trees in the parking lot.

You are likely to spot two species of hummingbirds in the arboretum. The rufous hummingbird, named for its rusty brown coloring, migrates from Mexico to as far north as Alaska each year. Expect to see the rufous in our area starting in March; it is usually gone by late August.

Anna's hummingbird lives here year-round, relying on gardeners to provide flowers and feeders during the winter. It has blue-green feathers.

When designing "A Hummingbird Garden," we selected plants that provide structure and year-round interest for the gardener as well as nectar for the birds. We also maintain feeders but have found that the hummingbirds often prefer flower nectar. This winter, when *Mahonia* 'Arthur Menzies' was blooming, you could watch the hummingbirds feeding on blossoms just inches away from a feeder. Still, it is best to use a combination of flowers and feeders to ensure a constant supply of nectar, especially in winter.



In the arboretum, some favorite native plants of hummingbirds include orange honeysuckle *(Lonicera ciliosa)*, red-flowering currant *(Ribes sanguineum)*, and salmonberry *(Rubus spectabilis)*. An exotic favorite is the Chilean fire bush (*Embothrium coccineum;* see the cover). This tree blooms in late spring to early summer along Arboretum Drive East, just across the road from the camellias, standing tall near the New Zealand garden.

We like to watch hummingbirds exhibit their unique acrobatic flying as they feed. They bring a flash of color and movement to the garden. In turn, they rely on our gardens to provide for their needs because much of their natural habitat is being destroyed by development. For example, hummers commonly nest in swamps and woodlands. When a forest is cleared or a swamp drained, breeding ground is lost.

For more information on hummingbirds, including a garden diagram and plant list, ask for the brochure, "A Hummingbird Garden," at the information desk in Graham Visitors Center. The gift shop also has many hummingbird-related items and books this year.

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Lynn Schueler is a member of the Pat Calvert Greenhouse Unit of the Arboretum Foundation. She has completed classes in horticulture at South Seattle Community College and is planting her own hummingbird garden in West Seattle. Reach her at (206) 243-6784; e-mail: lynnshoe@aol.com

# To Bee or Not to Bee?

## *The buzz on Arboretum honey and its origins*

BY JOHN A. WOTT

One recent winter evening, I attended the Pacific Northwest Ballet with a friend. During intermission, he introduced me to someone he knew from Scouting days, John Moen. Upon finding out that I was connected to the arboretum, Moen remarked, "My grandfather had a bee garden there!" It was the first I'd heard about it in all my years working here.

I checked with the current officers of the Puget Sound Beekeeper's Association and the arboretum staff, and indeed no one had ever heard of John's grandfather, Captain Carl Henry Moen. I contacted John's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Moen, for more information.

Morris happily helped satisfy my curiosity. He explained that the captain was instrumental in bringing bee hives to the arboretum, helping to establish the Bee Garden, and creating the still-famous arboretum honey. John Moen told me about attending, at the age of seven, a special picnic in the arboretum held in honor of his grandfather.

Indeed it appears that Captain Moen became interested in bees in 1919, when he was 19, back in Toledo, Ohio. He spent his early years with the Coast Guard and retired as Commander in the Steamboat Inspection Service in 1954.

Upon retirement, Captain Moen and his wife Laura moved to Seattle. He joined the Beekeepers Association and spent the next 40 years actively pursuing, caring for, and talking about bees. In the late 1950s, Captain Moen began to teach classes in beekeeping, sometimes having up to 40 participants, including many children who grew up to become beekeepers themselves.

In a news story written in the 1980s, Moen said that he had hived 1,118 swarms and that he had directed 1,138 swarms to members in 25 years. He obviously drove hundreds of miles in the Puget Sound area to retrieve hives and to assist homeowners with unwanted swarms, sometimes dealing with 200 swarm cells a day. His grandson remembers that the back deck of his grandfather's Dodge Dart held many dead bees and recalls seeing him on TV with swarms.

Apparently the arboretum became involved when the Beekeepers were looking around for a place to put their hives, because home yards were more risky for people to get stung. Permission was granted to install 12 towering hives here. The Beekeepers actually started with 6 hives, paying $10.00 each to the widow of a Beekeeper member.

Family lore has it that Captain Moen once put a queen bee in a deceased members's coffin (to honor his request) so that he would have bees and honey on the other side. Captain Moen himself died in 1991 at the age of 91, but his legacy lives on.

The Bee Garden is located south of the arboretum greenhouses. In recent years, Bob Clark was its main keeper, but he too, has become less active. In 1998, June Aploks, current president, reported the Beekeepers needed a new home for its monthly meetings. In exchange for some more allocations of that wonderful arboretum honey, the association is now meeting monthly in the Graham Visitors Center, and attendance is usually over 60.

And Captain Moen's Bee Garden again flourishes. As a part of the renovation proposed in the arboretum's master plan, the Bee Garden would be redesigned in the area of demonstration gardens.

Captain Moen always claimed the honey made in the arboretum was the best, because the bees had sampled so many different plants. Next time you are in the arboretum, stop by and purchase a jar of arboretum honey to decide for yourself.

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John A. Wott is Director, Washington Park Arboretum; e-mail: jwott@u.washington.edu

**The Buzz in the Arboretum**

Gift Shop~
Honey made with the help of Arboretum bees
$4.25 per 12-oz. jar

Puget Sound Beekeepers Association
(206) 361-7375
PO BOX 714
Seattle, WA 98111

Summer Nature Daycamp
In one session, those entering grade 3 will learn about wildlife in the Arboretum.
$125 per session
(206) 543-8801

*P. O. Gustafsson photo*

# More Reading about Wildlife in the Garden

The Elisabeth C. Miller Library has a free reading list of books and journals about birds, butterflies, and other wildlife in the garden. Below is a partial selection. This and other lists on topics such as "Alpine and Rock Gardening" and "Pruning," may be picked up at the Miller Library, Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle, Washington; (206) 543-0415. All reading lists and much more information from the Miller Library are also online:

depts.washington.edu/hortlib

## Books


Adams, George. *Birdscaping Your Garden: A Practical Guide to Backyard Birds and the Plants that Attract Them*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1994.

Bennett, Jackie. *The Wildlife Garden Month-by-Month*. Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1993.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden. *Gardening for Wildlife. Plants and Gardens:* Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record. Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1987.

DeGraf, Richard M., and Gretchen M. Witmer. *Trees, Shrubs and Vines for Attracting Birds*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979.

Schneck, Marcus. *Butterflies: How to Identify and Attract Them to Your Garden*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1990.

Sedenko, Jerry. *The Butterfly Garden: Creating Beautiful Gardens to Attract Butterflies*. NY: Villard Books, 1991.

Tekulsky, Mathew. *The Butterfly Garden*. Boston: Harvard Common Press, 1985.

Tekulsky, Mathew. *The Hummingbird Garden*. NY: Crown Publishers, 1990.

# Three Special Plants Inspired by Jerry Flintoff

BY KELLY DODSON

One of the most exciting parts of the nursery business is introducing new plants. Two of the ways we do this are: (1) hybridization or (2) selecting unusual plants found growing in cultivation and then propagating them. Just as exciting is seeing these plants earn a place in the gardening community.

Sometimes other people select plants that they bring to us at Reflective Gardens to propagate and distribute, which is no less rewarding. Two of the plants to be discussed below are good examples of selections made by Seattle plantsman Jerry Flintoff in the garden of Loie Benedict. The third plant selection was named for the man who has done so much for Northwest gardeners.

Flintoff spotted a distinctive *Primula sieboldii* in Benedict's garden. *P. sieboldii* is a hardy species adapted to vernally wet, grassy areas that dry out as the season progresses. It has adapted by going dormant in mid to late summer. This Japanese species, known as *sakurasoh,* is revered in its homeland, which devotes entire books and societies to extolling and cultivating the myriad forms. Even in this country we have a haven for afficionados in the American Sakurasoh Association (195 North Avenue, Westport CT 06880; dues are $25.00).

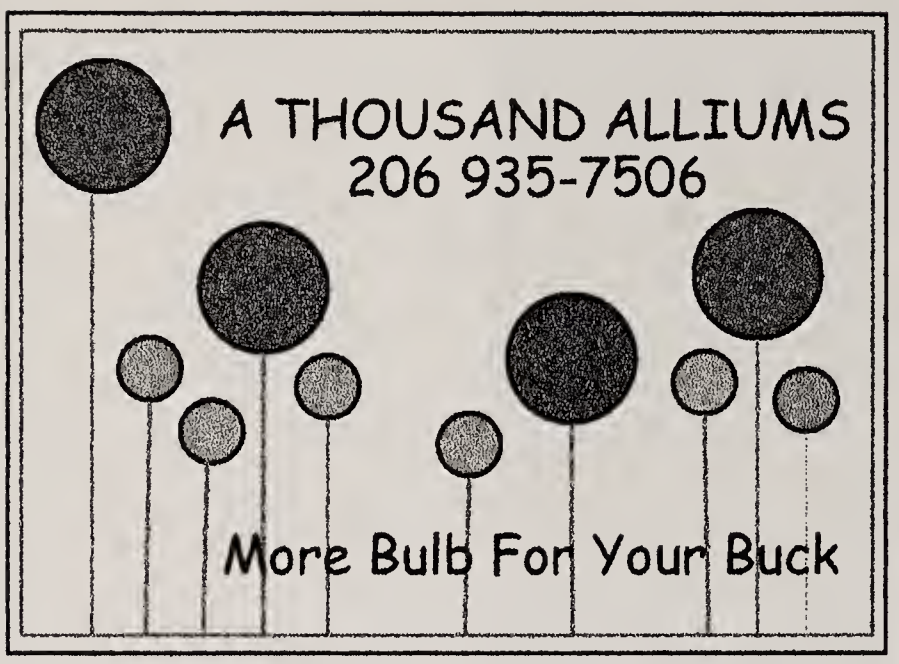
Flintoff recognized a clone in Benedict's landscape as being quite a departure from any other forms of *Primula sieboldii,* and he named it for her.

*continued on page 20*

*P. sieboldii* 'Loie Benedict'

*Ajuga* 'Loie's Lavender'

Herron Gardens
*Distinctive Northwest Design*
Ann Herron
(425)454-1216

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*P.* 'Loie Benedict' is very vigorous, with exceptionally large, rounded flowers of vibrant dark pink. The stems are tall and sturdy, hence resist falling over—a malady common to many *P. sieboldii* cultivars. This saucy primula spreads by short, creeping rhizomes and soon develops into a nice patch with multiple flower stems, creating a visual impact as if one had bedded out a flat of zonal geraniums. This could expand the consciousness of those afflicted with color timidity!

Another selection made by Flintoff from Benedict's garden was named *Ajuga* 'Loie's Lavender'. The small green leaves take on bronzy plum tones in winter. Being stoloniferous, it makes a good groundcover candidate. The outstanding feature on this plant, however, is that it represents a color change for ajugas, with numerous spires of dusky lavender flowers (grayer than shown in the photo). We have sent a plant to Wisley, which is currently trialling ajugas, and will be interested to see how it fares in this international comparative evaluation.

Here at Reflective Gardens, we have been nurturing a choice bloodroot for years. This was a chance find some years ago, and we are finally able to release a few. The gorgeous white flower is fully semi-double. It is intermediate in appearance between the double 'Plena' or multiplex forms and the single flowers found in the typical presentation of the species. Typically, the single-flowered forms have an early spring beauty that is unquestioned and a fragility that is legendary; the slightest look askance has been known to cause the petals to fall—usually just prior to garden visitors or photographing. In this special selection, however, an added bonus is that the flowers last a bit longer.

To honor Jerry Flintoff for being one of the planet's great plantsmen and to show our appreciation for letting us introduce some of his treasures, we have named it *Sanguinaria canadensis* 'Jerry Flintoff'.

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Kelly Dodson co-owns Reflective Gardens Nursery with Sue Skelly. Reach the nursery (which is open by appointment only) at (360) 598-4649; address: 24329 NE Snowhill Lane, Poulsbo, WA 98370; e-mail: kdodson@silverlink.net

# Invite a 'Court Jester' into Your Garden

*Bid on this unique epimedium to benefit the Arboretum Foundation.*

Hybridization is a means of developing new plants for introduction. In a breeding program, it is lucky if one seedling in a hundred merits further evaluation; the odds of a seedling surviving trials and endless culling to justify being named and released in the trade are far greater.

One such meritorious seedling is *Epimedium* 'Court Jester'. This is the best of my cross between *E. davidii* and *E. acuminatum* L575. *E. davidii* is a fine Chinese species with nicely toothed evergreen leaves and copious amounts of yellow flowers. *E. acuminatum* L575 was collected by English plant explorer Roy Lancaster from Sichuan Province in China. It possesses fairly large glossy green leaves with plum-colored bruises, and the rather large flowers have long, soft lavender spurs flaring out from behind a darker violet cup.

'Court Jester' combines the best of both parents and then does them one better. It is not as vigorously rhizomatous as other collections and produces shorter rhizomes and tighter clumps. The evergreen leaves are well marked with umber splashes, especially when young. Flowers are large, with long curved spurs that taper yellow. The base of rusty maroon embraces a rich yellow cup. Altogether, the flower is reminiscent of a court jester's hat.

This hybrid was spontaneously named upon viewing by Portland, Oregon, plantsman and botanical illustrator Jay Miner. And a court jester it is because the most remarkable feature of this spectacular epimedium is that it enjoys the stage so much that it is reluctant to cease blooming. Typically one can expect epimediums to bloom for a few weeks in spring, but 'Court Jester' continues to produce flower stems well into summer. In 1998, it finally quit in August.

We are offering one division this year on an auction basis with 100% of the proceeds going to benefit the Washington Park Arboretum. The bidding has started at $125, and bids will be accepted until May 28, 1999. Contact Christy Cronn at the Arboretum Foundation office, (206) 325-4510, or e-mail her: gvc@arboretumfoundation.org

This is an opportunity to have a good and very rare plant that can be found in only two gardens in the world—yours and ours! Good luck!—Kelly Dodson

# Looking at Spring in the Arboretum

PHOTOS BY JOY SPURR

Spring is glorious in the Arboretum. It almost seems that every acre is in bloom.

Washington Park Arboretum's dazzling flowering cherries and many rhododendrons always excite the crowds coming out of winter hibernation. In addition to these world-famous collections, you will find lesser-known woody plants and shrubs that might just seem perfect in your own garden.

Before exploring 230 acres of woody plants, shrubs, and perennials, it is possible to preview the spring arboretum on the Web: http://www.weber.u.washington.edu/~wpa/

*Photos*

TOP: Profuse May blossoms of *Disanthus cercidifolius.*

LEFT: *Deutzia glauca*—another shade of white in the June arboretum.

OPPOSITE PAGE, UPPER LEFT: *Malus* 'Candy Mint' in the crab apple collection during late April, early May.

FAR LEFT: May flowers on Azalea Way.

# How in the Arboretum?

## *Pruning Young Shade Trees: An Investment in the Future*

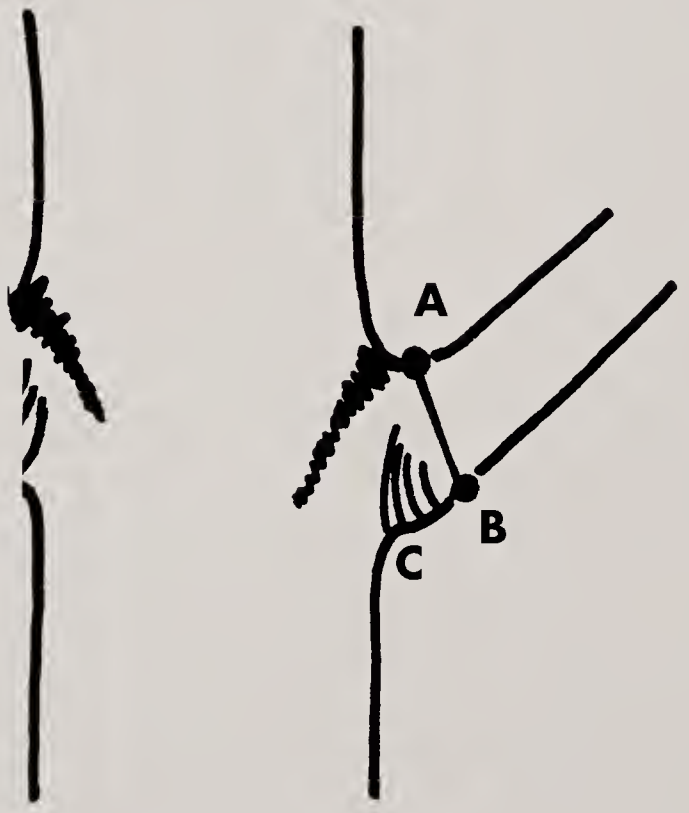
PHOTO & TEXT BY CHRISTINA PFEIFFER,
WPA HORTICULTURIST

A well-grown shade tree is a treasure in the landscape. It provides a stately presence, emphasis to the seasons, beauty to the community. Training young trees is one of the most beneficial garden tasks to ensure longevity and performance of the future mature tree. A few well-placed cuts with hand pruners while a tree is small can prevent structural problems and more extensive pruning requirements as it matures.

Many of the limb failures in winter winds occur at double leaders with included bark (where bark becomes imbedded at the branch junction). Limbs tightly clustered at the trunk make for weak connections and overall stunted development. And trunks without good taper at the base are structurally weaker against the wind.

Trees of vastly different species can look very much alike when very young. The first step is to become familiar with the eventual size and natural form of the tree at maturity. Look at well-developed older specimens and reference books. They are an important guide to how the tree should be pruned. The pruning should take place over the first few years after planting, doing a little bit as needed each year. Follow the tree's natural growth habit so it is not obvious that pruning has been done.

Paying attention to the developing form of the young tree and pruning with an eye to the mature tree is definitely an investment in the future—both for the health and longevity of the tree and as an environmental asset to the next generation.




The proper pruning cut, A to B.
Branch collar, C.
Diagram, courtesy of Arborist Bess Bronstein

## *Tips for Pruning Young Trees*

1. Keep it light. Use thinning cuts back to the point of attachment on the trunk, and leave the branch collar intact (see the diagram).

2. Remove dead, damaged, and broken limbs.

3. Protect the leader and terminal bud. Prune out competing upright shoots and one of the stems in co-dominant leaders.

4. Remove branches with very narrow crotch angles and included bark (on trees that don't have an upright form).

5. If needed, thin out branches along the trunk to provide good spacing between the scaffold limbs. The larger the mature size of the tree, the greater the spacing between these limbs, both vertically and around the trunk.

6. Retain lower branches the first few years to help develop good trunk taper. As the tree gains height, gradually remove these lower limbs to the height of the lowest permanent branch.

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Christina Pfeiffer is the horticulturist for Washington Park Arboretum, University of Washington; e-mail: cpfeif@u.washington.edu

Taking Shape

Japanese wing-nut, *Pterocarya rhoifolia*, in fall 1992, 2 years after planting. Four feet tall when planted, this species can reach a height of 50 feet here (80 feet or more in its native Japan). With its strong central leader and good distribution of scaffold limbs along the trunk, it needed little pruning at this stage. Since 1992, the trunk has developed good taper at the base, and the lowest branches have been removed. Visit this tree today, located in Boyer Flats (18-2W), just west of Azalea Way near the larch trees. A second specimen the same age is located directly west near Lake Washington Boulevard East (17-3W).

## Where in the Arboretum?

*Young Trees to See*

On a stroll through the Arboretum, you can see many different tree species of different ages and stages of maturity. Visits throughout the year reveal the array of seasonal attributes, from spring bloom and summer shade to fall color and winter architecture.

In the following two selections, the development of younger and older trees can be compared:

Katsura *(Cercidiphyllum magnificum)* is south on Arboretum Drive East near the Lookout parking lot (8-3E); the 3 trees were acquired in 1992. Find 2 trees in the Woodland Garden (29-3E), near the taller growing *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* facing Arboretum Drive East; they were acquired in 1946 and are now 40 feet and 50 feet tall.

Columnar southern beech *(Nothofagus antarctica* 'Puget Pillar'*)*, a WPA introduction, is on southern Arboretum Drive East (8-3E), near the katsuras listed above; 5 specimens were acquired in 1996. Compare them with 2 trees on the west side of the Lagoon area (49-2E), acquired in 1980.

A few highlights of other fine specimens to see at the arboretum:

Carriere hawthorne *(Crataegus* x *lavallei* 'Carrierei' ) is in the Woodland Garden, near Arboretum Drive East (31-3E)

Dove tree *(Davidia involucrata* var. *vilmoriana)* is in the Legume Collection, near Arboretum Drive East just north of Rhododendron Glen (16-6E)

Stewartia *(Stewartia monadelpha)* is in the *Camellia* Collection, along the trail from Arboretum Drive East to the Lookout (10-4E)

Chilean fire tree *(Embothrium coccineum)*, east of Arboretum Drive East, is just south of the Camellia Collection (8-4E)

Persian ironwood *(Parrotia persica)*, on the east of Arboretum Drive East in the *Hamamelis* Collection, is just south of the New Zealand display (7-5E).—Christina Pfeiffer

**Gardening questions?**
Ask the Elisabeth Miller Horticultural Library
via e-mail: hortlib@u.washington.edu or call (206) 543-0415.
Visit the Miller Library web site at the new address:
depts.washington.edu/hortlib

# For Further Information
## Women in the Garden

BY VALERIE EASTON

Do you ever wonder why gardeners are so obsessed—why we can't just make a pretty garden, grow a few flowers, and leave it alone? It seems we need to weed, water, stake up plants and move them around, dig in the dirt, or just mess around in the garden at every possible moment. I mean, how many movies do you see during the spring or fall? Even more absorbing, perhaps, is the mental time we all put in year-round, pondering new plants, fresh borders, which apple to grow, or when to cut back those grasses.

When and why does gardening become a full-time pursuit?

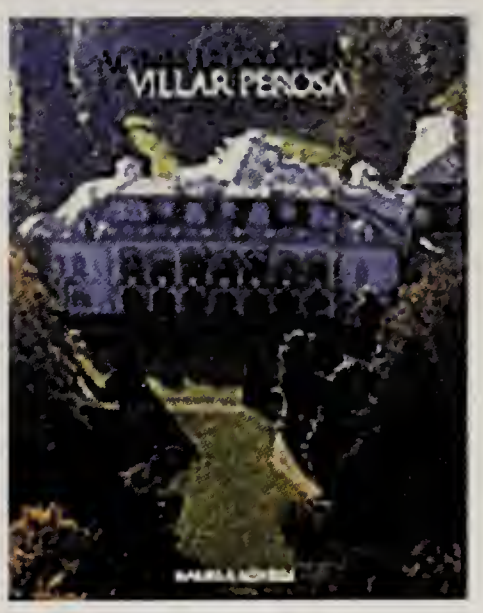
Answers are in books about the creations and obsessions of other gardeners. When we read how Vita Sackville-West set about turning the wasteland that became Sissinghurst into one of the world's best-known gardens, we can better understand how a garden can become the centerpiece, the driving force, of a life. While Sackville-West considered herself first an author, she remains famous not only for her writing but for what she created out of soil, hedges, plants, and garden walls. In *Sissinghurst: Portrait of a Garden* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1990), Jane Brown tells the story of how for more than 30 years Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West plotted, corresponded about, planted, and built the gardens surrounding their home. The story of how the garden has evolved since their deaths and how it lives on today is captured in text and glorious photos in *Gardening at Sissinghurst,* by Tony Lord (New York: MacMillan, 1995).

One of the most charming stories of a woman and her love for a garden is *Elizabeth and her German Garden* by Elizabeth Von Arnim (London: Virago Press, 1985), published anonymously in 1898 to instant success. It is the true tale of a young Englishwoman, precipitously romanced by an older Prussian nobleman. She marries him and moves to his vast Pomeranian estate, which just happens to have a rambling and derelict garden. Elizabeth finds the garden not only an absorbing occupation, but the source of all happiness. Despite unwelcomed interruptions from house guests, demanding children, and her husband (the "Man of Wrath"), Elizabeth spends every minute she can learning about plants and directing the gardeners. Though in her social class and time women could not garden themselves, she longs to grab a spade and dig in the dirt. "And why not?" she ponders. "It is not

graceful, and it makes one hot; but it is a blessed sort of work, and if Eve had a spade in Paradise and had known what to do with it, we should not have had all that sad business with the apple."

Although the witty writing nearly makes up for it, Elizabeth's story lacks visuals of that long-lost Pomeranian garden. In contrast, a brand new book, *The Agnelli Gardens at Villar Perosa: Two Centuries of a Family Retreat,* by Marella Agnelli (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), is noteworthy mainly for its stunning, double-page fold-out photographs. Located at the foot of the Alps, Villar Perosa is a vast estate with a private garden of 25 cultivated acres, home since the 1800s to the Agnelli family of Fiat fame. Marella Agnelli has designed, planted and photographed these gardens since 1953, following in the footsteps of five generations of Agnelli matriarchs. For three decades, garden designer Russell Page worked with Agnelli on the design of the garden; the story of their sometimes rocky collaboration and the resistance of the Italian gardeners to a visiting Englishman is in itself fascinating. You can ignore the extensive Agnelli genealogy charts. Instead concentrate on the amazing photos of the Lake Valley, created by Page. You will enjoy the series of eleven artificial lakes, surrounded by mature plantings, and the family chapel sheltered by century-old pines, lit by bright sunshine on a snowy day.

One of four winners of this year's American Horticultural Society's Book Award is *Earth on Her Hands: The American Woman in Her Garden,* by Starr Ockenga (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1998.) Eighteen exceptional women and their gardens are profiled in photos and text. Two Northwest gardeners from Washington State are included: Ione Chase of Orting and Jocelyn Horder of Poulsbo. And these are not just quick glimpses of the gardens that leave you hungering for more, but in-depth interviews, schematic drawings, and detailed sharing of expertise, such as lists of favorite ferns or colored foliage plants, the best plants for bonsai, and recommended fruit trees for home gardeners. The photos are large and plentiful, ranging from rows of corn to beloved pot-




ting sheds, from a peacock draping his majestic tail down the front of the garden fence to a close-up of cabbages. Best of all are the full-page black-and-white photographs of each gardener—in her work clothes, often leaning on a tool or accompanied by a dog—that artfully capture the personal nature of each of the gardens included.

## More Reading

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Valerie Easton is a freelance writer, whose work is familiar to those who read local and national gardening publications. Easton is the library manager for the University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture's Elisabeth Miller Library.

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